

**§ 115C-68.1. Merger of units by the board of commissioners.**

(a) The board of commissioners of a county in which two or more local school administrative units are located, but all are located wholly within the county, may adopt a plan for the consolidation and merger of the units into a single countywide unit.

The plan adopted under this subsection shall require that the county adopting the plan provide local funding per average daily membership to the resulting local school administrative unit for subsequent years of at least the highest level of any local school administrative unit in the county during the preceding five fiscal years before the merger.

The board of commissioners shall forward a copy of the plan it adopts to the boards of education of all local school administrative units located within the county, immediately upon adoption.

(b) The boards of commissioners of two counties in which one local school administrative unit is located in both counties may jointly adopt plans for each of their counties, including a plan of consolidation and merger for such unit that is located in more than one county. The results of such consolidation and merger shall be that there is only one countywide local school administrative unit in each county, or that the entirety of the unit located within two counties is merged and consolidated with the county unit of one of the two counties. Such plans shall also merge and consolidate any other city school administrative unit located wholly within one of the two counties. Within the two-county area, all the plans shall take effect on the same day.

The plans jointly adopted under this subsection shall require that the counties jointly adopting the plans provide local funding per average daily membership to the resulting local school administrative units for subsequent fiscal years of at least the highest level of any local school administrative unit being merged during the preceding five fiscal years before the merger.

The boards of commissioners of each of the two counties shall forward copies of the plans they adopt to the boards of education of all local school administrative units located within the county, immediately upon adoption.

(c) The plans under this section shall be prepared and approved in accordance with G.S. 115C-67 as provided by general law, or G.S. 115C-68 as provided by general law, as applicable, except that the county and city boards of education shall not participate by preparing, entering into, submitting, or agreeing to a plan, and the plan shall not be contingent upon approval of the voters.

(d) For the purpose of this section, local funding per average daily membership means the budgeted local expense per average daily membership. The State Board of Education shall establish guidelines for the computation of this amount and the amount shall be set out in the plan for consolidation and merger.

(e) If the State Board of Education fails to approve a plan submitted to it under this section, such failure to approve does not preclude the approval of the plan by the General Assembly by local act. (1991, c. 689, s. 37(b).)